

A Primer on BABS and her Top Level Opinions...

...on player projections: We take a massive leap of faith in proclaiming our aptitude as soothsayers. Yes, past statistics can be manipulated to project future performance, but within a very wide range of outcomes. The problem is, for our fantasy leagues, we need far more precision than we can currently achieve.

...on the construction of player projections: By combining disparate variables into a single projected stat line, you lose the ability to distinguish the skill from the risk. You simply can't toss everything in together and claim it's more accurate.

...on the perception of skill: We spend so much time trying to find differences between players in order to rank them that we ignore the fact that most of them actually have very similar skills sets. Yes, the numbers they put up might be all over the board but that's a "numbers" problem, not a skills problem. Players are more alike than they are different.

...and so: The more the marketplace tries to differentiate between like-skilled players, the more opportunity there is for Draft Day profit.

...on projecting playing time: I stopped paying much attention to playing time projections a long time ago. If maybe half of the player population is going to be on the disabled list at one time or another, plate appearances and innings are going to be shifting constantly. If a player has skill, there will always be an injury or positional shift that will "miraculously" open up a spot.

...on trends: We fantasy leaguers need to find patterns. But when the data itself is suspect – obscured in great measure by noise – maybe it's better not to be looking for something that might not exist.

...on injury risk: Every player starts with a 25 percent chance of spending some time on the DL. To that, we add greater odds to those players with an injury history or current health concerns.

...on experience risk: Any player with fewer than 1000 plate appearances or 300 innings is not yet a fully formed entity. The biggest risk for us is not knowing what their true baseline is.

...on auction pricing: Don't sweat it; auction pricing is going to be market-driven anyway. If you are convinced that a player is worth \$25 and land him for \$21, you will have overpaid if the rest of your league sees him as no more than a \$19 player. Even if he is really worth \$30.

...on average draft position (ADP) rankings: ADPs have very little relationship to player value. They are only good for setting market tendencies.

... on targeting players at their peak age: Overrated. With only 23 roster spots, the odds of rostering an outlier are not much different from the odds of rostering a player that fits your target.

... on park effect adjustments: Mostly a waste of time. Any adjustment could be well within the limits of normal statistical variance. If you use it at all, focus on the margins – players moving from or to the extreme parks. Ignore anything else in between.

... on position scarcity: It would only matter if we could really project the players at the bottom of the player pool. But end-gamers are not sufficiently projectable to justify the numbers you give up when you overpay for a top-ranked player.